

Lesson Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Lesson ID: 92559-30728

Title: FORCE SIZE

Operation/Exercise Name: MARFOR PROMOTE LIBERTY      Observed: 13 Jun 1990

Originator: COMMARFOR PANAMA

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5. (U) OBSERVATION:

Determining the proper force to accomplish our low intensity conflict (LIC) mission in the towns in our Area of Operations (AO) was one of our first challenges.

6. (U) DISCUSSION:

A large force would give the perception that the Marines were running the towns. A force that was too small would not allow the mission to be accomplished in addition to putting the Marines at unnecessary risk. Initially we had about 30 Marines living permanently in Arraijan. They performed law and order functions of walking patrols through town with the Panamanian National Police (PNP), motorized patrols throughout the AO, and conducted surveillance operations in the countryside. As the PNP progressed in their training, the number of Marines permanently billeted in the cuartel diminished accordingly. Eventually only 6 Marines were billeted in the cuartels while the patrols came from Rodman Naval Station under the cover of darkness.

7. (U) LESSON LEARNED:

Force size to accomplish missions in a LIC will vary and will require constant adjustment as the situation changes.

8. (U) RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the force size be constantly reviewed during LIC and adjustments made as the situation dictates.

9. (U) COMMENTS:

None stated.